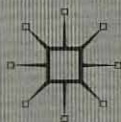


Citizenship, Identity, and Education in Muslim Communities

Essays on Attachment and Obligation



by Michael S. Merry and Jeffrey Ayala Milligan

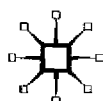


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Edited by
Michael S. Merry
and
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CHAPTER 5

Is Being Muslim a Fact or a Challenge? A Perspective on Muslim Identity, Citizenship, and Islamic Education

YEDULLAH KAZMI AND ROSNANI HASHIM

Like most religious communities Muslims do not constitute a monolithic, undifferentiated community but display a rich variety of differences. This fact is not appreciated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Needless to say, this fact is hardly ever acknowledged in the discourse of Muslim education. This essay explores ways that this absence can be filled. Hence the challenge for Muslim educators is twofold: to design a learning and teaching situation that not only tolerates, but celebrates difference without surrendering commonality, and to imbue Muslims with sufficiently robust historical consciousness to be effective historical actors. If educators meet this challenge successfully then the issue of citizenship can also easily be resolved.

The discussion that follows is presented as a perspective on education and deliberately eschews any attempt to engage in constructing a grand theory or a meta-narrative of education. Grand theories or meta-narratives not only have a tendency to still the movement of history but also incline toward negating differences. Insensitivity to history and blindness to difference has been the bane of much of the thinking on Islamic education. This has accrued for the most part by focusing primarily on *what* to teach rather on *who* is being taught. These negative tendencies have been compounded when the question "what to teach?" is answered with reference to life here after with only a cursory